

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 1024

By Henry

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Milton Oludhe Ochieng' and Frederick Otieno Ochieng'.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should salute those citizens who, through their extraordinary efforts, have distinguished themselves as humanitarians and community leaders of whom we can all be proud; and

WHEREAS, two such noteworthy persons are Milton Oludhe Ochieng' and Frederick Otieno Ochieng', who have evinced the greatest integrity and probity in all their chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, born in the remote Lwala community of Kenya's western province of Nyanza, the Ochieng' brothers learned early in their lives the importance of communal bonds and public service, for it is only through close cooperation that the 1500 residents of Lwala have learned to survive, without the conveniences of running water and electricity, by resourcefully collecting water from intermittent sources and subsisting on sub-Saharan crops, such as maize, beans, groundnuts, bananas, cassava, yams, millets, sorghum, finger-millets, and tomatoes; and

WHEREAS, with few nearby health care facilities and poor systems of infrastructure, the residents of Lwala further face rampant diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis, pneumonia, pharyngitis, tonsillitis, typhoid, worms, and HIV/AIDS, a condition which afflicts approximately thirty percent of the community's population; and

WHEREAS, in their youth, Milton and Frederick Ochieng' developed a keen interest in medicine, inspired in part by an incident in which they attempted to transport a pregnant Lwala woman in a wheelbarrow over more than five miles so that she might receive medical attention; and

WHEREAS, graduates of Kenya's oldest high school, Alliance High, the Ochieng' brothers both earned scholarships to New Hampshire's prestigious Dartmouth College, from which they graduated before attending Vanderbilt University's School of Medicine; and

WHEREAS, while students at Vanderbilt University, the brothers have opened the Lwala Community Clinic in order to improve the community's access to health care; the Clinic, which has served more than 15,000 Kenyans since its opening in May of 2007, offers basic, important health care services, such as suturing and draining of wounds; common medicines, including deworming drugs and antibiotics for malaria; prenatal pills for pregnant women; and HIV tests; and

WHEREAS, an idea conceived by Milton Ochieng' after assisting in the construction of a similar facility in Nicaragua during a Dartmouth service trip, the Lwala Community Clinic has been an immense success largely due to the dedicated efforts of the Ochieng' brothers, who spearheaded the complex endeavor to raise funds, coordinate the construction of the facility, and initiate operations; and

WHEREAS, in their quest to provide the Lwala community with a primary care clinic, Milton and Frederick Ochieng' have been aided by the efforts of many organizations in Kenya and the United States, American college professors and administrators, college student groups, high school and middle school groups, and numerous distinguished citizens, including Senator Bill Frist, Bruce Springsteen, and the members of the musical group Jars of Clay, all of whom assisted in fundraising endeavors that resulted in thousands of dollars for the Lwala Community Clinic; and

WHEREAS, the outstanding efforts of these exemplary young men have been documented and commemorated in the film *Sons of Lwala* by filmmaker Barry Simmons; and

WHEREAS, not yet graduates of the Vanderbilt University Medical School, the Ochieng' brothers already have utilized their educations and considerable talents for the benefit of humankind, and they exhibit great promise in creating a better world for all to enjoy; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly finds it appropriate to pause in its deliberations to acknowledge and applaud Milton and Frederick Ochieng' for their tireless dedication to improving the quality of life for their fellow citizens of the Lwala community; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and commend Milton Oludhe Ochieng' and Frederick Otieno Ochieng', applauding their valuable contributions to the betterment of the global community, especially their native Lwala, and extending to them our best wishes for every future success as they further expand their humanitarianism through the practice of medicine.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.